

# News Review



We are pleased to bring you **The Cremation Society's** news review for September.

We hope our newsletter will help you to stay informed of news and developments from across the cremation sector.

You can also find The Cremation Society on [BlueSky](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

## THIS ISSUE'S NEWS UPDATES

- Highland Council's planned £1.2m upgrade to crematorium at Kilvean Cemetery gets the green light
- Five-year Angus crematorium battle back at Court of Session next month
- Funeral facility set to unveil results of £350,000 refurbishment
- East Lothian Crematorium offers Scotland's first immersive funeral experience
- Basildon Crematorium offers the funerals of the future - today
- National Medical Examiner News
- Cremation Society News: visit to The Oaks Crematorium
- Advertiser Spotlight: Obitus - How AV technology is redefining the Crematorium experience



# The Cremation Society

Rooted in history: committed to the future



Our annual Directory of Crematoria will be available to purchase soon. Please visit our [website](#) for more information.



## NEWS REVIEW

### CREMATORIA NEWS

#### **Highland Council's planned £1.2m upgrade to the crematorium at Kilvean Cemetery gets the green light**

The £1.2 million pound upgrade of Inverness's crematorium to ensure it is fit for purpose into the future has cleared a major hurdle after securing planning permission. The proposal, which will see modern cremation ovens replace the existing facilities at Kilvean Cemetery - as well as works to extend the building and plant enclosure - were recently given the green light by council officers under delegated powers. The council's communities and place committee heard last month how the new cremation ovens were vital in order to ensure the crematorium remained fully functional. Members heard how the need to replace the existing cremators had become necessary due to the planned introduction of stricter emissions standards by 2027 and the collapse of the company which made the existing facilities - the latter of which posed "long-term reliability" risks for the current plant when it comes to ongoing maintenance and support. The two new Facultative Technologies III SE cremators, are expected to be installed by Morrison Construction contractors, with work on site beginning in November. The extension is expected to be wind and watertight by March, when the existing Cremator 1 will be removed. Its replacement will follow, with work on that expected to be finished within 10 weeks. Cremator 2 will then also be removed in July of next year, with its replacement expected to have been installed by that September. Facultative Technologies is then expected to handover the completed cremators that same month. The staggered approach to the work will ensure the crematorium can continue to operate throughout the upgrade. The new cremators are part of wider efforts to extend the cemetery's life, with the council also recently pursuing plans to increase the number of available burial plots by a further 1,830 - ensuring the site can remain operational until at least 2066. The project was granted planning permission subject to a number of conditions, including one to ensure local populations of the protected Great Crested Newt are protected during construction. To read the full article, head to: [\*\*www.ross-shirejournal.co.uk\*\*](http://www.ross-shirejournal.co.uk)

---

## NEWS REVIEW

### CREMATORIA NEWS

#### **Five-year Angus crematorium battle back at Court of Session next month**

A farmer's five-year fight to secure permission for a new Angus crematorium will return to Scotland's highest civil court next month. Guthrie Batchelor first lodged plans for the site at Duntrune, on the Angus Council border with Dundee, in November 2020. The Duntrune proposal triggered massive local opposition. In 2023, Mr Batchelor secured the green light for the project. At that time, Angus planning review councillors overturned a 2021 decision by officers to block the scheme. But local objector Paul Dixon challenged the appeal committee's decision in the Court of Session. The authority did not contest Mr Dixon's assertion the Duntrune decision was unlawful. It led the court to order the council to constitute a new appeal committee to consider the application. However, it also granted conditional approval for the greenfield site in August 2024. Mr Batchelor was set to progress the crematorium build until a second court challenge was mounted by Mr Dixon at the end of last year. He sought a statutory review of the second appeal outcome. Court of Session rolls reveal Mr Dixon's case against Angus Council is scheduled to be heard next month. It will call in Edinburgh on Wednesday October 15th. The matter is due to be heard before the Lord President, Lord Pentland, and fellow judges Lord Doherty and Lord Ericht. To read the full article, head to: [www.thecourier.co.uk](http://www.thecourier.co.uk)

---

#### **Gornal Wood Crematorium refurbishment in Dudley now complete**

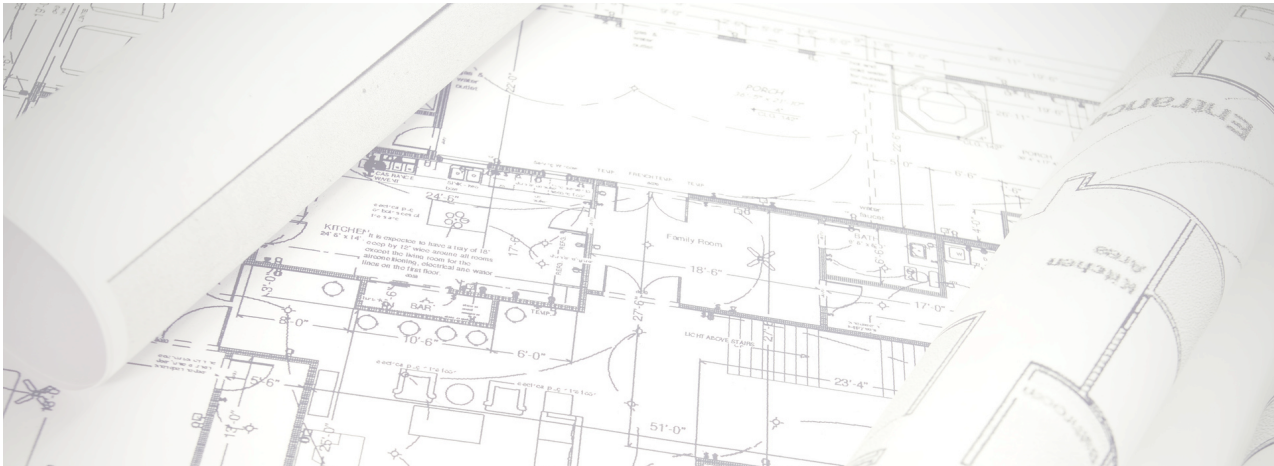
More mourners will be able to attend funerals at a crematorium thanks to a £1.1 million refurbishment. The seating capacity at the chapel at Gornal Wood Crematorium has increased from 90 to 120, while a host of other improvement works have been completed. The crematorium reopened at the start of the month and has since hosted more than 70 funerals. Other work to the chapel included the installation of air conditioning and improved heating; new carpets, lectern, furniture and seating; an upgraded music media system; renovation to the toilets and the installation of another fire door. The toilets now have level access and are wheelchair friendly, and a disabled access ramp has been added to the external access area for the waiting room. The wreath terrace – where floral tributes are placed after a funeral service – has been resurfaced, as has the footpath and area outside the front of the chapel. And there has been work to the driveway as well as the installation of an EV charger and lighting on the main car park. To read the full article, head to: [www.dudleynews.co.uk](http://www.dudleynews.co.uk)

---



## NEWS REVIEW

### CREMATORIA NEWS

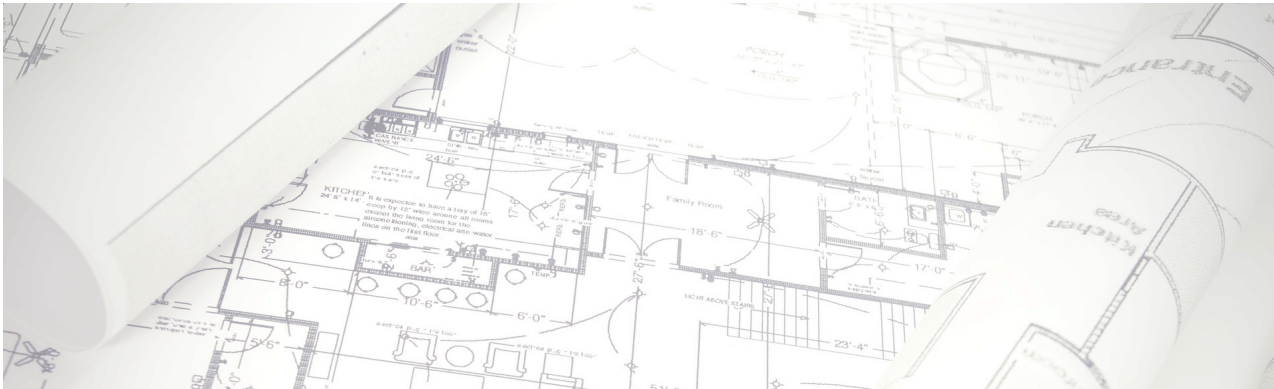


#### **A FUNERAL business is set to unveil the results of a £350,000 refurbishment project.**

The work has been carried out at Hammerwich Crematorium and Cemetery – previously known as Chase and District Memorial Park – after it was acquired by AW Lymm last year. The improvements have included facilities upgrades to the chapel, air conditioning, audio and visual system and groundwork as part of what the company says will be a “first major step” in transforming the site. Pete Clarson, commercial director at AW Lymm, said: “We’re really pleased to report that since acquiring Hammerwich, the number of cremations being conducted here has already doubled – and that’s before our refurbishment works have been completed. It is wonderful to see Hammerwich Crematorium and Cemetery undergoing such a transformation. Our investment reflects our commitment to providing families with dignified, comfortable surroundings capable of modern and traditional services and we look forward to welcoming people into the improved setting very soon.” Work is also being undertaken to increase the amount of car parking space at the Burntwood Way site from 19 spaces to 52. Hammerwich Crematorium and Cemetery manager Jane Baker said: “It’s incredibly exciting to witness this level of care and investment being brought into the site. AW Lymm’s vision for Hammerwich aligns perfectly with our hopes for the future and the improvements already taking shape show just how committed our new owners are to local families.” An official opening for the refurbished site will take place at 4pm on 3rd October. To read the full article, head to: [www.lichfieldlive.co.uk](http://www.lichfieldlive.co.uk)

## NEWS REVIEW

### CREMATORIA NEWS



#### **East Lothian Crematorium offers Scotland's first immersive funeral experience**

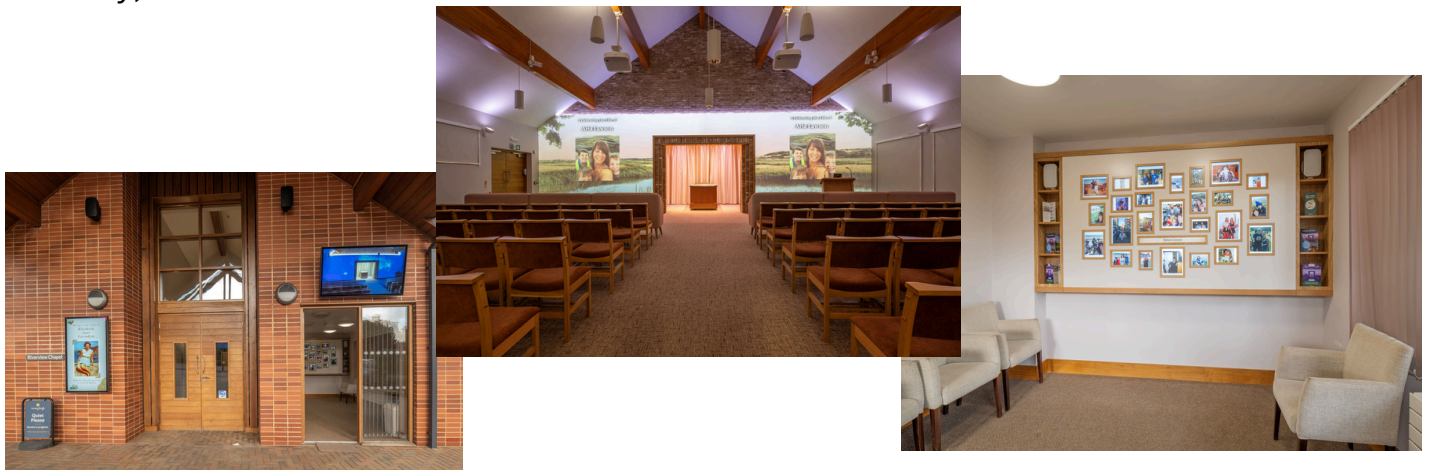
East Lothian Crematorium & Memorial Gardens will open for services on Thursday, October 23rd, offering families uniquely personal farewells and Scotland's first experience of state-of-the-art 'super venue' technology. The brand-new facility is the first in Scotland - and only the third anywhere in the world - to feature the 'super venue' system. Dynamic projections, harmoniously coordinated lighting, and synchronised soundscapes create an immersive experience which enables funerals to be personalised to unprecedented levels and to create an atmosphere that is truly authentic to the person remembered. The super venue experience involves projecting dynamic themes onto the entire wall at the front of the chapel interior, enhanced further through matching lighting and soundscapes. With a wide choice of customisable themes, funerals can be specifically tailored like never before to reflect the individuality, interests and passions of the person being remembered. Families can also display up to 25 digital photos on a gallery wall in the waiting room and have an image shown on the chapel's welcome screens. East Lothian Crematorium is part of Westerleigh Group and the immersive experience was developed in partnership with Obitus, the UK's leading audio-visual provider to the bereavement industry. Local residents can see the new crematorium - and experience the incredible technology - for themselves when it hosts its open day on Saturday, October 25th, between 10am and 2pm. This will also be an opportunity to meet the dedicated team that will be providing local bereaved families with the exceptional service on which Westerleigh Group has built its reputation. To read the full article, head to: [www.edinburghlive.co.uk](http://www.edinburghlive.co.uk)

## NEWS REVIEW

### CREMATORIA NEWS

#### **Basildon Crematorium offers the funerals of the future - today**

Basildon and District Cemetery & Crematorium can now offer bereaved families the chance to experience the funerals of the future, today, thanks to state-of-the-art technology. It is the second crematorium in the world to be transformed into a 'super venue', enabling the bereaved to make funerals more uniquely personal than ever before. Its Riverview Chapel has been fitted out with state-of-the-art technology which creates immersive, uniquely personal funeral service experiences. Mourners can now be greeted by an image of their loved one on the chapel's external welcome screens. In the waiting room, there is an option to display a gallery-style showcase of treasured photographs, providing a quiet space for reflection and remembrance before the service. Inside the chapel, mourners will find themselves surrounded by a beautifully-curated immersive theme as selected by the family, projected onto the entire front wall of the chapel - canvas - and accompanied by harmoniously co-ordinated soundscapes and lighting. This technology enables families to choose unprecedented levels of personalisation for their loved one's funeral, to truly reflect the individuality, interests and passions of the person being remembered. Basildon and District Cemetery & Crematorium is part of Westerleigh Group, one of the UK's largest independent owners and operators of crematoria and cemeteries, with 41 sites in England, Scotland, and Wales, and which is trusted by more families than any other provider to deliver funerals for their loved ones. It is set within beautifully landscaped gardens of remembrance and cemetery, which provide peaceful places for people to visit and reflect, while benefitting from exceptional care and support from its teams. The innovative experience is the result of a partnership between Westerleigh Group and the UK's leading audio-visual provider to the bereavement industry, Obitus.





## NEWS REVIEW

### NATIONAL MEDICAL EXAMINER NEWS

The National Medical Examiner has released his annual report since the statutory implementation of the medical examiner system on 9th September 2024.

The report includes information on:

- the preparation for the death certification reforms
- implementation of the reforms and their impact
- feedback around MCCDs and the timeline between death and registration
- updates on the work carried out to improve the issues surrounding information on the removal of hazardous implantable medical devices
- ongoing training and funding of medical examiner offices.

The full report can be read on the NHS England website:

**<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/national-medical-examiner-report-2024/>**



Image: National Medical Examiner Alan Fletcher/CBCE Administration Office

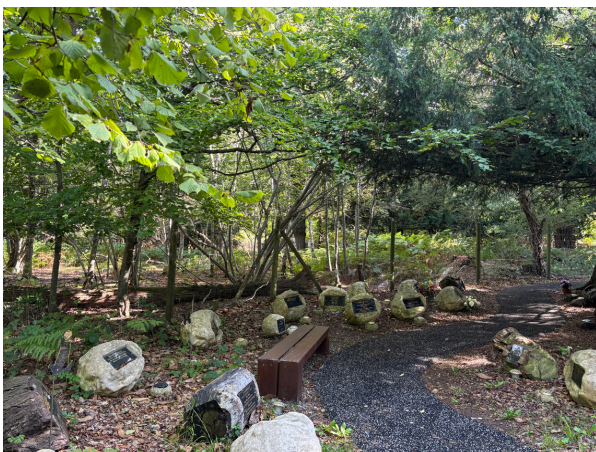


## NEWS REVIEW

### CREMATION SOCIETY NEWS

Sharing Cremation Society news and updates as part of our ongoing charitable activities.

We were delighted to visit **The Oaks Crematorium** in Havant, with Emma Connors - Head of Crematoria and Burial Grounds for Southern Co-op. Emma, Rachel and the team demonstrate an admirable passion for meeting the needs of bereaved people in their area, in delivering a first class service and providing impeccable and beautiful grounds. Opened in 2013, the site has matured into a beautiful setting, with the woodlands, tended to by a local knowledgeable volunteer, providing a calm area for reflection and memorialisation. We look forward to featuring Emma and her team's work in future publications.



**The Oaks Crematorium**

## NEWS REVIEW

### ADVERTISER SPOTLIGHT

A monthly spotlight, covering the recent activities, engagements, and contributions of our valued advertisers.

#### **How AV technology is redefining the Crematorium experience**

Crematoria in the UK are facing a moment of transformation. Increasingly, it is the quality of the service experience that lingers in memory, and audiovisual experiences are now at the heart of how people come together to grieve, celebrate, and say goodbye. At Obitus, our work with crematoria has shown us one thing very clearly: audiovisual technology is no longer a “nice to have.” It has become essential infrastructure, shaping the way funerals feel, how families participate, and how services are remembered.

#### **Immersive experiences – the new Supervenue Standard**

One of the most exciting developments is our new Supervenue Standard technology, designed to create immersive experiences for both those present and those watching remotely. Families today want services that move beyond the functional, they expect moments that feel meaningful, reflective, and inclusive of everyone, wherever they may be. With Westerleigh Group, we have brought this vision to life at three venues so far, introducing innovations that transform the chapel environment. The Canvas is a back-wall projection system that fills the space with visuals, soundscapes, and tailored lighting. Families can choose scenes that reflect their loved one’s personality or passions, whether a woodland walk, a coastal horizon, or something more symbolic, creating an atmosphere that feels authentic and deeply personal. Alongside this, the Gallery displays cherished photographs in digital frames before the service, offering a gentle space of connection and reflection. Finally, the Welcome Screen greets families on arrival with a personalised message, setting the tone for the service, and ensuring every detail feels considered. Together, these features turn a funeral into an experience rather than an event. They combine technology, music, and storytelling to create a moment unique to the individual being remembered, immersing families in an environment where memories come vividly to life.

#### **Personalisation: giving families more choice than ever**

This shift is also reflected in our recent personalisation survey, which revealed how strongly families now expect services to reflect individuality. An overwhelming 97% of respondents said families actively ask about personalisation, confirming it is no longer optional, it is central to the funeral experience.

## NEWS REVIEW

### ADVERTISER SPOTLIGHT

#### **AV as the new essential**

Looking ahead, we believe audiovisual technology may soon be regarded as equally, if not more, important as the cremator itself. The cremator performs the necessary practical process, but it is the service that shapes how families feel, how they remember, and how they heal. Reliable AV ensures services are delivered with dignity and without disruption. It enables inclusivity, allowing relatives and friends across the world to take part. And it ensures crematoria can continue to meet the evolving expectations of the communities they serve.

#### **Looking to the future**

The role of the crematorium is expanding. Families are not only looking for a place of committal, but also for a space of connection, reflection, and storytelling. At Obitus, we believe that investing in AV and personalisation is not about keeping up with change, but about setting new standards of care. By blending compassion with innovation, we are helping crematoria deliver services that are dignified, meaningful, and unmistakably personal. In doing so, we are shaping a future where every goodbye truly honours the uniqueness of a life.

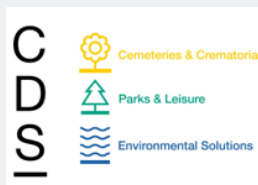
Find out more at [www.obitus.com/workwithus](http://www.obitus.com/workwithus)



# PHAROS INTERNATIONAL

## ADVERTISERS

We are proud to introduce our **Pharos International Journal** advertisers.



If you would like to advertise in **Pharos International** please [click here](#) for a media pack. We offer attractive discounted rates for 5 issues - available upon request for new advertisers. 10% Agency Discount. Continue reading to learn more about our advertisers.

No responsibility is accepted for the accuracy of claims made by advertisers or for the sustainability or standard of goods so advertised.



# PHAROS INTERNATIONAL

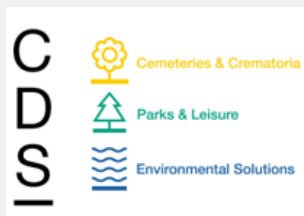
## ADVERTISERS



**Benchmark Architects**, are an innovative architecture and design studio, with a passionate and personable team who enjoy working on creative, challenging, and innovative projects.



**DRM Technic**, is one of the UK's leading suppliers of gas analysis and conditioning equipment and services. They are also a renowned manufacturer of Continuous Emissions Monitoring Systems (CEMS).



**The CDS Group**, offer their clients a complete solution of in-house environmental, design, and planning services covering cemeteries and crematoria, parks and leisure, and environmental solutions.



**The Columbaria Company**, are specialists in the production of personalised memorial artwork and after cremation memorials.



**F G Marshall**, supplied the very first Book of Remembrance to Woking Crematorium in 1938. To this day, technology still hasn't replaced the precision, skill and touch of the human hand.

If you would like to advertise in **Pharos International** please **click here** for a media pack. We offer attractive discounted rates for 5 issues - available upon request for new advertisers. 10% Agency Discount.

No responsibility is accepted for the accuracy of claims made by advertisers or for the sustainability or standard of goods so advertised.

---

# PHAROS INTERNATIONAL

## ADVERTISERS



**Facultatieve Technologies**, have over 140 years of experience in the design, construction and maintenance of cremation and filtration equipment.



**Greenbridge Designs**, from individual memorials to complete garden schemes, Greenbridge produce a range of memorials that will seamlessly fit into existing schemes, as well as some that will create a stunning alternative.



**IFZW**, is an established manufacturer of cremator and emission filter systems.



**Obitus**, provide bereavement technology services, delivering music, webcast and tributes for families, funeral directors and leading funeral venues throughout the UK.



**OrthoMetals**, is a family owned and operated business, recycling metals remaining after cremation.

If you would like to advertise in **Pharos International** please **click here** for a media pack. We offer attractive discounted rates for 5 issues - available upon request for new advertisers. 10% Agency Discount.

No responsibility is accepted for the accuracy of claims made by advertisers or for the sustainability or standard of goods so advertised.

---

# PHAROS INTERNATIONAL

## ADVERTISERS



**PlotBox**, is an international death care management solution. They facilitate cemeteries and crematoria in operating to world-class standards through integrated software and georectified mapping modules.



**SK Environmental Ltd**, is a UK manufacturer of instrumentation for measurement and control of combustion plants, specialising in environmental monitoring and control products.



**Treske**, are one of the UK's leading makers and suppliers of bespoke crematorium furniture and soft furnishings.



If you would like to advertise in **Pharos International** please **click here** for a media pack. We offer attractive discounted rates for 5 issues - available upon request for new advertisers. 10% Agency Discount.

No responsibility is accepted for the accuracy of claims made by advertisers or for the sustainability or standard of goods so advertised.

---



# The Cremation Society

Rooted in history: committed to the future

## Contribute to our newsletter

We love to receive news/press suggestions from our readers to include in future newsletters.

For any news you would like us to consider, please contact us at [info@cremation.org.uk](mailto:info@cremation.org.uk)

## Our contact details



01622 688292/3



[Info@cremation.org.uk](mailto:Info@cremation.org.uk)



[www.cremation.org.uk](http://www.cremation.org.uk)



The Cremation Society,  
Brecon House (1st Floor),  
16 Albion Place,  
Maidstone,  
Kent, ME14 5DZ.

## Find us on social media



If you do not wish to receive future newsletters from us, please email us at [info@cremation.org.uk](mailto:info@cremation.org.uk) and simply type 'STOP' in the heading

The views expressed in the Editorial comments are those of the Editor and unless specifically stated otherwise, are not the official views of the Cremation Society. No responsibility is accepted for the accuracy of articles reproduced in this newsletter.